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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
TUESDAY, JULY 8, 2008

In Today's Papers

Suspects in Dink Murder Trial Turn on Each Other

All papers report on the continuing trial against the suspects accused of assassinating Hrant Dink, editor of the Armenian-Turkish publication Agos. Dink was shot dead outside the offices of Agos in Istanbul in January 2007. Ogun Samast and Yasin Hayal were later arrested on charges of murder. The first five hearings were closed to the media because suspect Samast was a minor at the time. One of the now 19 defendants charged in connection to the murder said he informed the gendarme at least four times that Yasin Hayal, a key suspect in the plot, planned to have Dink killed. Samast, the prime suspect in the murder trial, told the court Hayal asked him to kill Agos daily's security guard and other employees as well -- a charge Hayal denied.

European Parliament member Cem Ozdemir and several other international figures attended the hearing as observers. Ozdemir told reporters before the hearing, "Hrant Dink's vision of a democratic, secular and European Turkey has not yet materialized." The trial began in July 2007. Prosecutors have demanded a prison term of 18 to 24 years for Samast because he was underage at the time of the murder. However, life sentences are being sought for the two key suspects, Hayal and Tuncel, for inciting murder.

'Operation Ergenekon' Reveals another Coup Attempt

All papers report a third coup plan, codenamed "Glove," was revealed by leftist Taraf daily on Monday. The plan was set to be implemented after two previous coup attempts failed in 2003 and 2004. The document was found in retired General Sener Eruygur's office during searches related to the Ergenekon case. The "Glove" plan aimed at "reshaping the parliament, the military, the bureaucracy, and local governments," while "rewriting the constitution, the entire legislation and the National Security Policy Document." Operation Glove hoped to secure media support and fund certain media efforts to harm liberals and mobilize the public to support the military.

Islamist-oriented Zaman claims the documents seized last week in the

Ergenekon investigation revealed that the group was planning a bomb attack in Istanbul's Taksim Square to stir chaos that would eventually lead to military intervention. Zaman recalls that a scenario discussed at a Hudson Institute meeting on June 13, 2007 described a bomb attack killing at least 50 people in Istanbul. The paper adds the conspirators were also plotting to murder prominent figures such as chief prosecutor Abdurrahman Yalcinkaya and top military officers.

According to a confiscated diary allegedly belonging to Naval Commander Admiral Ozden Ornek, Retired General Eruygur was allegedly a key accomplice in the plan, along with three other force commanders. The diary also detailed failed attempts to oust the AKP. Ornek has always insisted that the journal does not belong to him. On Monday, Admiral Ornek once again rejected allegations that he was the author of the diary, which was published by Nokta weekly.

Meanwhile, CNN Turk reports State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack called the Ergenekon investigation, "an internal matter for Turkey," during the daily press briefing yesterday.

Editorial Commentary on Ergenekon, Turkey's Political Crisis

"The Diary of a Coup"

Melih Asik wrote in mainstream Milliyet (7/8): "Retired Admiral Ozden Ornek denied accusations that the so-called 'coup diary' belongs to him. He also noted that only Alper Gormus of Nokta magazine has attributed the diary to him. Some question Ornek's denial suspiciously by asking, 'Why didn't the Admiral deny the

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allegations earlier, why did he wait this long?' As a matter of fact, Admiral Ozden denied the allegations in Nokta only one week after Gormus' original claim. In addition, there is no evidence or court decision that proves the diary belongs to Admiral Ozden. However, AKP supporters continue to accuse certain retired generals of being coup conspirators. Their intention is not to tell the truth, but to corner the military and remove all obstacles from their path to a religious coup."

"Overcoming This Crisis"

Yilmaz Oztuna commented in conservative-nationalist Turkiye (7/8): "Turkey will overcome this crisis. However, during the process it will be important not to damage national institutions, the state and democracy. The state and democracy should show its power. Ataturk established the Turkish Republic together with the Turkish Parliament. The Turkish military established the Turkish State after saving the country from enemy invasion. Therefore, the Turkish military, as well as the Turkish Parliament, should be kept away from any harm. The Judiciary evaluates cases on behalf of the Turkish people and their decision should definitely be obeyed. The Turkish state has the ability to maintain stability and we hope to see stability emerge from this crisis as soon as possible, without damaging national institutions and without dishonoring Turkey's standing in the world during this day and age."

"The Future of the Parliament"

Muharrem Sarikaya commented in mainstream Sabah (7/8): "Because the Constitutional Court is deciding whether or not to close the ruling party, the ruling party wants to keep the Parliament open until the resolution of the case. However, MHP Leader Devlet Bahceli allowed all but one of his deputies to go on vacation and CHP Leader Deniz Baykal will not demand that all CHP deputies remain in Parliament. While the Constitutional Court also considers the closure case against the DTP and the DTP holds its Party Congress this weekend, it is natural that the DTP will be occupied with other things outside the Parliament. Therefore, only the AKP deputies remain in Parliament this summer. However, as long as the Parliament remains open an additional problem emerges for the AKP. Former Deputy Prime Minister Abdullatif Sener is actively seeking 20 deputies to join his newly formed political party. In order for his party to run in the elections, he needs at least 20 deputies to support him in order to meet the threshold. Sener expects a number of his old friends from the party to join him and he can recruit from the AKP deputies that are present in Parliament. For this reason, it seems unlikely

that keeping the Parliament open will decrease tensions. Instead, it is likely that keeping the Parliament open will aggravate tensions."

Fried: We Don't Want a Divided Island

Mainstream Milliyet, CNN Turk and NTV carried straightforward coverage of Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Dan Fried's comments in Nicosia after meeting Turkish and Greek Cyprus leaders, "We don't want a divided island." Mainstream Milliyet notes Fried emphasized the U.S. had "no special plan" for the island, and called for a "bi-zonal, bi-communal federation and one nation, one citizenship in Cyprus."

Babacan Meets Ahmadinejad in Malaysia

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others report Foreign Minister Ali Babacan, who is attending the 'D8-Developing 8' meetings in Malaysia, met Iranian President Ahmadinejad to discuss developments in Iraq and the fight against the PKK. In his talk with Babacan, Ahmadinejad reportedly praised Ankara's position on the controversy regarding Iran's nuclear program. Prime Minister Erdogan was expected to attend the D-8 summit but changed his plans due to the ongoing investigation into the Ergenekon group, according to papers.

Will Turkey Join the Mediterranean Union and the Black Sea Union?

CNN Turk reports European lawmakers called on the EU to establish a

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Black Sea Union that includes Turkey. Meanwhile, Islamist-oriented Zaman writes in "Paris' Eyes Are on Turkey," that "The French are confident Turkey will join the Mediterranean Union," but that "Turkish leaders are carefully evaluating the option," but such a union, "would not be accepted by Turkey as an alternative to full membership in the EU." Sami Kohen of mainstream Milliyet writes Turkey would play a role in "a Mediterranean Union that targets issues such as the environment, energy, commerce, terrorism, and illegal immigration." In addition, Kohen comments, "The Mediterranean Union and the EU can work together and cooperate in a number of fields," which he feels, "would create an atmosphere that could facilitate a solution to the problem," of Turkey's EU accession. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet writes in, "Ankara Cannot Get a Guarantee from Paris," that "last year Germany, Spain, and France signed an agreement in Rome stating that a country's membership to the Mediterranean Union will not impede that country's negotiations for full EU membership," however the paper notes, "Ankara does not find this to be a sufficient guarantee."

TV News:

CNN Turk

Domestic News

- Leading AKP figures say former Deputy Prime Minister Abdullatif Sener should resign from the AKP since he is preparing to form a new political party.

- On Monday, three people died of the "Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic Fever," a tick borne viral disease, in the provinces of Bursa, Canakkale and Amasya.

- Turkey is ranked 55th in the IMF list of countries with the highest per capita income.

International News

- NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said the EU should extend its defense ties with Turkey to help ease European cooperation with NATO.

- On Tuesday, the European Court of Human Rights will announce its ruling regarding Turkey's 10-percent election threshold.

WILSON